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SUBJECT: "BUYING BLANKETS." Information from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today I'm bringing you some tips on buying blankets--that is, tips to help you judge the quality of a blanket in the store, as suggested by home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

As you know, this year it may be more helpful than ever to know how to judge quality in blankets as you buy. For blankets, like many other household items, are now reflecting the international situation as it affects materials and price.

For one thing, wool isn't so plentiful this year. And wool is the fiber that makes the warmest blankets. For another thing, many manufacturers have begun to simplify sizes and colors of blankets in order to save labor and material for defense purposes, so there may not be so much variety of sizes and colors of the particular type of blanket you are considering.

And now, to get down to cases, here are some of the definite points to check about a blanket before you buy it.

Find out what the blanket is made of. That is, see whether the blanket is all wool, or part wool, or all cotton. The fiber that goes into a blanket makes a difference in its warmth and should make a difference in its price.

The more wool there is in a blanket, the warmer the blanket if the wool is of good quality. Wool is warmer than cotton because it fluffs up better. What really keeps a person under the blanket warm is the still air held in this fluff.



A great variety of part-wool blankets are on the market. That's because the part of the blanket that is wool can be anywhere from 5 to 98 percent of the whole. Here's a point to keep in mind in buying a part wool blanket. The textile experts say that a part-wool blanket has to be at least 25 percent wool to make much difference in its warmth.

The other fibers in a part-wool blanket may be cotton, or rayon, or a mixture of fibers. In general, cotton makes a stronger blanket, and wool a warmer one.

So much for fiber content of a blanket. Now here are a few tests to apply to a blanket as you look at it in the store, to find out how well it is made.

Be sure to hold the blanket up to the light. That will show whether the fuzz--or nap as it's called--is even all over the blanket. If it's very uneven--if the wool has been fuzzed up so much in some places that the foundation weave is thin in some spots and thick in others, that's bad. For the thin spots will soon wear out.

When you have the blanket up to the light, look at the underlying weave. This should be regular all over. Yarns should be smooth, even, spaced regularly, and close together.

Another thing you can tell while you're holding the blanket to the light--is whether the blanket has been cut straight with the cloth. You can see this by noting the way the threads run. The crosswise threads should run parallel to the ends of the blanket.

Now another thing you'll want to note is the way the blanket is finished at the ends. Probably there will be a rayon or a sateen binding on it--or maybe just a row of lockstitching. Make sure the bindings are sewed on tightly. And see that there aren't a lot of loose ends of threads on the lockstitched finish.



The way a blanket is made has a lot to do with how well it will wear. But the biggest point in comfort--next to the warmth of the blanket--is size. Too-short blankets have caused many a restless night--cold feet or cold shoulders. And too-short blankets are likely to wear out more quickly because of the extra tugging they get.

The size of a blanket usually is ~~marked~~ on the blanket label. But when you buy "bargain" blankets, better have the blanket measured for you at the store.

And here are the sizes of blankets that the home-economists say are suitable for the different sized beds. Naturally, blankets that are larger than these sizes are all right, too. But here are the minimum sizes--to allow for a good tuck-in at the bottom.

For a double bed, a blanket needs to be at least 72 by 84 inches to allow plenty of room for tuck-ins. That's a blanket 6 feet wide and 7 feet long.

For a single bed, of course, the blanket will have to be just as long, but it can be narrower. 63 inches by 84 is about the smallest size satisfactory for a single bed.

For a twin bed--the blanket needs to be at least 66 inches wide and 84 inches long.

And finally--just a word about labels. There are many points about blanket quality you cannot possibly judge just by looking. So you'll be glad to know that there is a trend toward labels giving you more and better information these days. These labels make it possible to compare the various properties of different blankets in the same price range. Be sure to look for these labels, and learn to read them. Find out what information is important and what isn't. These labels in effect are a guarantee of quality.

And that's all about blankets for today.



